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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
8 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

State Dept. review completed.

MIDDLE EAST

(Situation Report Number 12
As of 1630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

2070Z

GENERAL

1. Israel continues to press its counterattacks on both fronts, but there is no evidence that Israeli units have crossed the canal in force. Israeli Chief of Staff Elazar acknowledged publicly late today that Israeli forces have "not yet" crossed the canal.

2. Israeli air activity over the Syrian front continues to be heavy, and Israeli aerial operations near the canal have increased. UN observation teams in the Golan Heights report that the Israeli forces have retaken many of the positions lost to the Syrians,

Israeli troops continue to hold out in encircled positions along the canal.

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THE SYRIAN FRONT

3. Israeli forces continue to press the attack against Syria. A member of the UN observation force in the Golan Heights has confirmed that the Israelis have retaken many of the positions lost there to the

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4. [REDACTED]
Israeli press reports have become increasingly optimistic during the day. Israeli Chief of Staff David Elazar stated in a late afternoon press conference that Israeli forces had reached the 1967 cease-fire line on the Heights in "almost all cases."

25X1

[REDACTED] as of 1615 hours Tel Aviv time (1415Z), the entire Syrian force had been driven from the Heights. He indicated that Israeli forces had stopped at least for the moment at the 1967 cease-fire line. The Israeli representative also reported that Israeli settlements in the Heights had been declared safe and that inhabitants were returning.

THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

5. Information on ground combat along the Suez Canal this evening was limited to public announcements from Cairo and Tel Aviv. Israeli Chief of Staff Elazar stated in his press conference that the Israeli holding action over the past two days had permitted time for mobilization and that Israeli forces in the canal area now were on the offensive. He said that Israeli forces had pushed some of the Egyptian units back to the canal, but denied that Israel had crossed to the west bank. Elazar stated that Israel intended "to destroy completely" the forces of Egypt and Syria.

6. Cairo has admitted that the Israelis are counterattacking, but has claimed that the attacks are being repelled. According to the US Embassy in Amman, the Jordanian Ambassador to Cairo said that based on events yesterday, the Egyptian military believe they have won an important victory and cannot be pushed back from the canal. The Egyptian military also reportedly believe that they have sufficient additional strength to push into the Sinai and are said to be urging Sadat to allow them

25X1

[redacted]

to do just that. The Israeli counterattack today almost certainly will temper Egyptian optimism, as the main Israeli reserves move into the fray.

7. Air activity during the day and into evening was focused on the [redacted] the canal. [redacted]

25X1

25X1 Israeli air [redacted] in the Port Said area began this morning and continued throughout the day and into the night. The scale of the attacks does not equal those seen on the Syrian front, but are much heavier than yesterday. [redacted]

Egyptians sent at least 20 fighters to Port Said in mid-afternoon to challenge the Israelis. The results of the air battle are unclear, but the Egyptians claim to have downed 24 Israeli fighters, while losing only ten of their own. The Egyptians also used SAMs against the Israeli fighters. [redacted] that at least six Israeli [redacted] attacked near Devesoir at the north end of the Great Bitter Lake late this afternoon.

25X1

SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES

8. No significant Soviet military activity has been reported since our last Sitrep.

IRAQ

9. King Husayn has been advised that Iraq's action this morning to restore relations with Iran was taken to free Iraqi troops for action against Israel. The Iraqis are concerned, the King was told, that his continuing neutrality is preventing the rapid transit of Iraqi troops to the front.

JORDAN

10. The pressures on King Husayn to join the battle are discussed in an annex to this report.

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11. [redacted] activities of the Jordan Arab Army suggest nothing more than normal defensive preparations. Panic buying of food-stuffs has occurred, perhaps spurred by a rumor that Americans are preparing to evacuate the country and to the general rumor, noted in some other countries, of ominous Sixth Fleet movements.

SYRIA

12. The Syrians released the tourist cruise ship *Romantica* at 0630 Zulu today. The ship reportedly was headed for Cyprus.

LEBANON

13. Because of initial Arab military successes, the Lebanese Government reportedly feels it has its hands full resisting domestic pressure, particularly from the Muslim community, to take an active part in hostilities. As a result, President Franjiah believes he cannot risk a confrontation with the fedayeen now and is allowing them to move troops into southern Lebanon. Franjiah has placed the Lebanese armed forces on alert with orders to oppose any Israeli incursion, but most of the army is concentrated near Beirut in case of internal disorders.

14. Lebanon assured the Israelis yesterday that it was not passing radar information to the Syrians or permitting the fedayeen to operate freely out of its territory. This apparently satisfied the Israelis, who no longer seem concerned about Lebanon or the fedayeen now that their counterattack has begun in the Golan Heights.

15. The Lebanese cabinet has put national hospitals--and the American University hospital--"at the disposal of the Syrian government" and has sent three surgical-medical teams to Damascus, according to an official announcement.

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16. King Hassan, [redacted] is very upset by what he believes to be a one-sided US reaction in favor of Israel. The King

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is reportedly annoyed and concerned about the movements of the US Sixth Fleet and an alleged remark from Washington that the US will take any proper measures to obtain a cease-fire. [redacted]

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[redacted] if the Sixth Fleet becomes involved in Middle East events the King may move against American bases in Morocco. The US Embassy in Rabat has expressed its concern over the King's current mood and the vulnerability of the US Naval complex at Kenitra.

LIBYA

17. President Qadhafi is reported to be extremely angry about the Syrian-Egyptian offensive and about the lack of forewarning to him, [redacted]

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[redacted] Qadhafi reportedly does not want to engage Libyan forces in the fighting, which he believes was initiated strictly for Egyptian and Syrian diplomatic gains. Most Libyans are puzzled by Qadhafi's reaction but have apparently shared Qadhafi's detached attitude. Serious Arab reversals could change all this but for now Tripoli is quiet with no evidence of heightened anti-American feeling.

SAUDI ARABIA

18. King Faysal has placed the Saudi armed forces on complete alert and appears to have taken several token military measures in support of a Saudi brigade in Jordan. However, the King appears to be avoiding an active role in the current crisis.

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ANNEX

Can Jordan Stay Out of the Fighting?

Although the Jordanians have insisted all along that they have no intentions of entering the fighting unless attacked, their mood has fluctuated from one of elation after Syria and Egypt's initial success to one of apprehension as the Israelis begin to counterattack. King Husayn is now under severe external pressure to commit himself, particularly since President Asad has asked him to intervene and other Arab states have pledged military support to Cairo and Damascus. Sadat may also be urging him to strike soon. The Jordanians are continuing to play for time, hoping for a cease-fire, but Prime Minister Rifai has indicated that Husayn will not be able to stall for much longer.

Rationally, Husayn knows Jordan would face certain defeat and the destruction of its armed forces if he attacked Israel. If the King decides to stay out, he would have the support of his civilian and military advisers, who to a man are probably urging him not to fight. From all available evidence, however, Husayn is agonizing over his decision. It is not in his nature to sit idly by and he is likely to find it increasingly frustrating not to be able to do something once the Syrians begin to crumble under the Israeli counterattack. He has expressed admiration for the Syrians' fighting ability and appreciation for the way Asad has handled Jordan's neutrality thus far. In the end the advice of his advisers will probably prevail, but it is likely to be touch and go for the next day or so.

If the Israelis try to turn the Syrians' flank by attacking through northern Jordan, this, of course, would turn the situation around. In that case, Husayn would feel compelled to throw his forces into the fray.

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